

Background Information on Gifted and Talented Education

Provided by Montana Association for Gifted and Talented Education

Why G-T?: Gifted and talented students and those with high abilities need gifted education programs that will challenge them in regular classroom settings and enrichment and accelerated programs to enable them to make continuous progress in school.

-More than 7 in 10 teachers of these students surveyed noted that their brightest students were not challenged or given a chance to "thrive" in their classrooms.

-Studies found that 320 gifted students identified during adolescence who received services through the secondary level pursued doctoral degrees at more than 50X the base rate expectations, compared to 2% among the general population.

-A 25 year study tracked 2,409 intellectually talented adolescents (top 1%) who were provided services through a talent search program. They collectively earned 817 patents and published 93 books, one had been awarded the Fields Medal in mathematics, and another had won the John Bates Clark Medal for the most outstanding economist under 40.

The Montana Constitution (Article X, Section 1) says: Educational goals and duties.

(1) It is the goal of the people to establish a system of education which will develop *the full educational potential of each person*. Equality of educational opportunity is guaranteed "to each person of the state". Additionally, Montana regulations mandate identification of gifted students, AND the provision of educational programs and services; *however, there is no oversight of compliance with Gifted and Talented Education policies.*

Talent Development requires:

- Resources (funding, curriculum and other materials) to enable districts to support student-directed learning;*
- Teacher preparation, mentoring, and ongoing professional development to recognize and respond to student needs;*
- Policy support which encourages broad implementation with appropriate flexibility;*
- Leadership in the form of visibility, priorities and administrative support at the State level.*

Relevant statistics:

The State of Montana currently provides **\$250,000 annually** for GT students. This approximates **\$21-27 per gifted student or less than .03 percent of the State budget** being spent on programs specifically to develop talents and gifts of high ability students.

Specific Recommendations

- Restore funding grants to LEAs to 2009 level of \$1M; ask schools to match up to 50%;*
- Allocate \$75,000 for professional development leading to a certificate in Gifted Education;*
- Restore dedicated support for G-T at OPI to one FTE.*
- Designate a portion of IEFA funds to develop distinctive talents among Native American students;*
- Consider special allocations for initiatives that address at-risk populations, community outreach, and STEM/STEAM-oriented projects.*

School Funding Interim Commission
January 13, 2016
Exhibit 43

GIFTED & TALENTED EDUCATION

